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Dear Doug:

This is in response ~~to your~~ to your letter, and various other communications with which you have, from time to time, favored me (including your dialogue with Col Taylor.)

As for your dissatisfaction with the class, I can say first that it was not altogether different from my own. I considered it to be something of a research seminar, taking up a problem in which I had for some time been immersed. I felt that my writings on the general question of the nature of the American regime were sufficiently extensive so that they would provide a structured view of the "woods," while we devoted ourselves in class to just a few of the "trees". While it is easy--or at least possible--to paint a crowded and diversified picture of American history and American institutions, it is not easy to be confident that the picture is accurate. The tendency is--to change the metaphor--to lose a little on each item, but make it up on the volume! I think I am on the way to formulating a deeper understanding of the relationship of federalism to nationalism in the American regime than has hitherto been articulated. There is nothing novel in my approach or method: it consists essentially in sticking with the central documents and the key facts until they have been mastered better than has been hitherto done.

The course was the first one you have taken with me, and had you consulted me in advance I would have recommended the one on Aristotle which I was giving simultaneously. The basic method would have been the same, but my approach to political philosophy would have been seen in its development de novo from fundamentals. American political thought, even if our own, is still a very derivative thing; its relationship to human experience (as its roots in social contract theory shows.)

As far as my being attended by an "in" group which made you feel like an outsider, I can but sympathize. Still, are we not all members of group which are "in" with ourselves and "out" with others. When you speak of Winston Churchill as an "aristocrat and elitist, the symbol...of British imperialism racism, capitalism..."etc., I feel as if I were at the Mad Hatter's tea party! To me he is the Nemesis of Adolph Hitler. His Britain (and the British Empire) were those who "stood alone...until those who had hitherto been half blind, were half ready." So I think the problem of communication was not only the special vocabulary of my "in" group, as the fact that you have been accustomed to other groups, no less inward with respect to a different set of symbols. But the question remains, what is the proper way of understanding the phenomena which underlie our different symbols?

You speak with favor of my dialectical examinations of "equality" in connection with the Lincoln-Douglas debates, but find it inconsistent that I should "speak out in justification of every manner of imperialism and cold warriorism." But I see nothing inconsistent in my antagonism to American slavery, on the one hand, and to Communism, Fascism, and National Socialism on the other. Moreover, the "containment" policy which the United States has hitherto followed with respect to Communism, since World War II, seems to me to be closely analogous to Lincoln's policy towards slavery, which was one of opposition to its extension. Now the analogy may be inapplicable, and I may, as a matter of prudential judgment, be mistaken. But it seems to me that, on the face of it, I have applied Lincolnian principles to the world

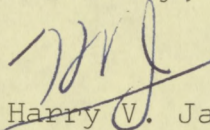
situation. It is up to you to show that I have been wrong--which you might well be able to do--but to assume that I have been inconsistent is not--on its face--reasonable.

The United States is, I think, itself an empire of freedom. I am an imperialist in that sense, but none other. An empire of freedom must, like any other, depend upon strength for its preservation. That strength requires moral and material factors, and among the latter, military strength. During the Civil War, Lincoln wrote to a Quaker lady thus: "Your people--the Friends--have had, and are having, a very great trial. On principle, and faith, opposed to both war and oppression, they can only ^{practically} oppose oppression by war. In this hard dilemma, some have chosen one horn, and some the other." Like Lincoln, I have a great deal of sympathy with those who find themselves impaled on the horns of this dilemma. But I have none at all with those who assume a tone of moral superiority to those who wish to defend freedom from tyranny by force of arms.

I think your strictures against "capitalism" are simply ill-informed. A free polity can only subsist upon a free economy. The latter must be based upon private property. Given the "unequal faculties of acquiring property" which are in human nature, a free society will always be characterized by economic inequalities which, in turn, will lead to political inequalities. It is a constant problem, to keep the paths of achievement open to men of unequal abilities, and yet to prevent these unequal abilities from choking the future paths of others. Legislation must prevent too great inequalities from arising, because a polity of equal rights should not see in it too great inequalities of wealth. Still, how much is "too much", and how to distinguish the effects of merit from those of privilege, are problems for which there can never be any simple or final solution. But I take it as proved, that a monopoly of economic power, such as one may find under either Communism or Fascism (or something euphemistically called "state capitalism") is incompatible with political freedom. The kind of abuses to which you point are, I think, the inevitable concomitant of the effort to have a free polity; they are not ^(as such) evidence of endemic defects in the principles of the polity.

I was certainly pleased that I should have been instrumental, in one way or another, in leading you to read your father's dissertation. And, in discovering that other ancestor, John Taylor. (Another student of mine, Gordon Lloyd, did a dissertation on Taylor a few years back.) I think you covered a great deal of ground in one semester, and I hope you will carry on the work.

Sincerely,



Harry V. Jaffa